

Argento's Aesthetic Alignments:
A Cognitive Approach to the Films of
Dario Argento

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Introduction

"I like women, especially beautiful ones. If they have a good face and figure, I would much prefer to watch them being murdered than an ugly girl or man." – Dario Argento¹

A man's teeth smash onto a table edge, before he is stabbed through the neck. Another is dragged along a road by a truck before having his skull crushed in oncoming traffic. Another is killed by his own dog, and another is eaten alive by rats. These are all scenes from films by Dario Argento, and they are scenes that typify his work. They are under-analysed scenes, however, demonstrating the "blind spot" within the theoretical field as recently identified by Patricia McCormack.² Although Argento's body of work features consistently brutal, stylised scenes of violence and death, analyses of his films return to the same, tired arguments regarding the aestheticisation of violence toward women, displaying, in McCormack's terms, an "astonishing specularisation of women" by comparison to the male characters in the films.³ McCormack rightly claims that work on Argento's films routinely favours an approach which assumes the women therein are filmed in such a way as to be purely aesthetic, when in fact his films, generally, are aesthetic throughout, regardless of a character's gender. Dario Argento is a contentious filmmaker for many reasons, from his illogical narratives to his recent films' poor quality, but perhaps above all else it is Argento's treatment of female characters which most often causes debate. Argento's films are consistently over-shadowed by the issue of the aestheticisation of female death. The above quote, apparently demonstrating Argento's love for killing off women, is often cited as a means to support arguments that Argento's films display a hatred for women.⁴ What I intend to demonstrate in this study is that a fresh approach to Argento's films is both worthwhile and long over-due.

As I will outline below, psychoanalysis has been the primary method of analysis when considering Argento's films, much in keeping with its "stranglehold" on the analysis of horror films.⁵ While psychoanalysis has certainly proven a rich approach to Argento's body of work, it tends to yield repetitive results when exploring the representation of gender in his films. McCormack concisely and effectively outlines that analyses of Argento's films do obsessively pick over his representations of women, time and time again. Not only is this to the detriment of uncovering other themes within his work, it also displays a gender bias: very little work has

¹ Quoted in Jones, *Profondo Argento*, 120

² Patricia McCormack, *The Many Deaths of Giovanni Lombardo Radice*, 109

³ Ibid.

⁴ See Clover, 42; Guins, 147

⁵ Donnelly, *The Spectre of Sound and Music in Film and Television*, 89

been done on the death scenes of men, which are not only equally aesthetic, but also approximately equal in number. McCormack's claim comes from her own study of the death scenes of Giovanni Lombardo Radice, an actor she chooses because, amongst other reasons, he is a man, and therefore an analysis of his death scenes subverts the "conventional positioning of the gaze as heterosexual and male".⁶ It is, in some respects, an unconventional position that I wish to adopt for my own study, but rather than approach scenes of male death in Argento's films, I intend on analysing scenes which have received much prior analysis or attention. I have chosen to analyse these scenes as a means to demonstrate that approaching a text unconventionally may uncover over-looked readings. This tendency in the work on Argento's films to re-analyse the same films or scenes *ad nauseum* leaves potentially more illuminating or interesting scenes ignored. This is especially true in the case of Argento's later films, about which very little has been written. This may primarily be due to the general consensus of Argento's later films having very little value to them,⁷ which begs the question: why continue to study Argento at all? The main motivation for this work is to approach Argento's much-analysed films without the gender-bias that seems inherent to such studies; however, I also hope that by proposing a different approach to Argento's films, his more neglected films may offer themselves for analysis.

Although I am not employing a psychoanalytical approach, I do not disagree that Argento's films are highly aestheticised. I would argue that an alternative approach to psychoanalysis to such aesthetic work as Argento's can allow for sympathetic character engagement and not presume a sadistic positioning of the spectator. Argento is an appropriate case study not only due to his position as a horror *auteur* whose films have been repetitively analysed, but also as a filmmaker who serves as a crux for several issues facing the horror film: gender, aesthetics and genre. Although I wish to propose a 'return to the text' in the case of Argento, I do not wish to do so by ignoring the contexts in which his films must be placed. Perhaps the greatest of these is the context of Argento himself, as *auteur*, an approach which strengthens the need to consider his entire *oeuvre*, up to the present day.⁸

It is from a feminist standpoint that I wish to place this study, even as I suggest, in effect, 'ignoring' the issue of gender and returning to the text. This comes as a response to the

⁶ McCormack, *The Many Deaths of Giovanni Lombardo Radice*, 109

⁷ Gracey, 21

⁸ Argento's most recent film, *Giallo* (2009), despite receiving several festival screenings, has yet to be released theatrically or on DVD, and therefore I will not be including it in this study's considerations. I am also choosing to disregard, for the purposes of this work, *Le Cinque Giornate* (1973), the only film directed by Argento not to be a horror or a crime film (and again, because of its relative unavailability).

preoccupation with the depiction of women in Argento's films. Issues of gender and sexuality are indeed key to his films, and often central to his narratives. His killers are often female or queer,⁹ and have only become killers due to a past trauma relating to their position as non-male.¹⁰ By solely focusing on the aestheticisation of female representations, potentially illuminating readings are left unexplored. There are two aspects of the main assumptions made about Argento's work that I find problematic. Firstly, that the representation of women is uniquely aesthetic in his films; and secondly, that the aesthetic representation of death is somehow 'negative' or 'wrong'. The first is problematic in so far as it disregards the aesthetic nature of the entirety of an Argento film. In doing so, the representation of women becomes something that stands out from his work, when in actuality such extensive aestheticisation is present throughout his work. This unnecessarily shifts the focus onto his representation of women and away from his films as a whole. The second is problematic in that it assumes that aestheticised death or violence necessarily positions the spectator in such a way that they enjoy violence for violence's sake, and as a result do not sympathise or engage with the victimised characters. What I hope a study such as this can reveal is that it is in fact through moments of highly aestheticised, often violent, spectacles that the spectator is encouraged to engage with Argento's characters the most; that through intense spectacle comes intense engagement.

As I have outlined, and will outline in greater detail in chapter one, psychoanalysis has been the dominant methodology in approaching Argento's work. To work against the misplaced assumptions, briefly discussed above, an alternative method must be employed. For the purposes of this study, the alternative approach will be cognitivism, which I outline in greater detail in chapter two. Cognitivism allows greater space for an active spectator, as well as accounting for an emotional response to film. In applying this to a textual analysis of Argento's work, the inherent aestheticism will not only be able to exist for its own sake, but also as a means for positive engagement.

To consider Argento's work in light of an aesthetic approach, rather than an ideological approach, is to reveal the function of cinematic artistry in what are, otherwise, 'generic' films. Tom Gunning writes of a "cinema of attractions" in relation to pre-narrative cinema, which was centred on spectacle, rather than narrative.¹¹ Scott Bukatman positions Gunning's work beside

⁹ I use queer to mean any sort of non-heteronormative character, rather than only gay or lesbian characters. See Hall, *Queer Theories*, 51-81, for further discussion on the use of the term.

¹⁰ Take for example Monica Ranieri of *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*, who turns killer after a sexual assault; or Nina Tobias of *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* who becomes psychotic after she was mistreated as a child for being androgynous.

¹¹ See Gunning, *The Cinema of Attractions*, 162-164

that of Laura Mulvey, who I discuss further in chapter one, arguing that although taking fundamentally different approaches, they both tread similar ground, arguing that spectacle in film is a disruptive force.¹² Bukatman chooses to “bracket out gender” from Mulvey’s argument,¹³ and as a result uncovers her thoughts on spectacle. Similarly, to step away from the notion of gender in Argento’s films is equally as illuminating, albeit perhaps equally as “perverse”.¹⁴ Recently, the concept of ‘attraction’ has been considered in relation to the Hollywood special effects film, which appears to favour spectacular set-pieces over well-thought out plot or tightly constructed narrative.¹⁵ The same can certainly be said of Argento’s films, and an analysis of his films, or at least the violent set-pieces in his films, as attractions would certainly prove refreshing and useful. It might be said that the alignment presented to the spectator is precisely spectacular, that it is in the moments of spectacle that alignment is at its strongest. When alignment with the characters involved in the spectacle is achieved, the intensity of the spectacle – be it through camerawork, editing, or music – heightens the spectator’s attachment to the character.

In chapter one I will outline the contexts of Argento’s work, from nationality to genre, as well as briefly account for the psychoanalytical approaches so often employed to his *oeuvre*. Chapters two, three and four will each consider particular films directed by Argento, particularly ones which have received much prior attention. Correspondingly, each of these analyses will focus on a specific textual element of the film’s construction, in order to highlight how different formal elements work to encourage spectatorial engagement. Naturally it is only in combination that any of the formal elements of Argento’s work achieve the truly spectacular, and I hope that, cumulatively, this will become evident. I would argue that Argento appears to achieve a subversion of generic expectations through his use of film language. In order to explore this, I will divide my analysis into three areas. In chapter two I examine Argento’s use of the camera in *Tenebrae* (1982); in chapter three the editing of *Terror at the Opera* (1987); and in chapter four the use of music and sound in *Suspiria* (1977).

¹² Bukatman, 80

¹³ Ibid., 71

¹⁴ Bukatman, 71

¹⁵ See Elsaesser, *Discipline through Diegesis*; Verstraten, *Between Attraction and Story*

Chapter One

Dario Argento: Contexts and Precedents

The son of a film producer and a photographer, it is hardly surprising that Argento became an artist, surrounded by the creative industries from childhood. He worked with Bernardo Bertolucci and Sergio Leone on the story for *Once Upon a Time in the West* ('C'era una volta il West', Leone, 1968) and worked as a film critic before embarking on his own career as director, with *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* ('L'uccello dalle piume di cristallo', 1970). Throughout his career Argento has repeatedly worked with members of his family as well as frequent collaborators. While the term itself remains debateable, Argento can be counted amongst a long list of horror *auteurs*. Maitland McDonagh, in her introduction to *Broken Mirrors, Broken Minds: The Dark Dreams of Dario Argento*, states her intention clearly with regard to Argento's auteurism, that rather than simply pointing out similarities between Argento's films, she intends to isolate interesting elements of his work and examine the reason they are interesting.¹⁶ McDonagh rightfully points to Argento's frequent collaborations with the same team of film technicians as an aesthetic choice, noting the possibility that "their sensibilities have inflected Argento's".¹⁷ Argento does conform to classical ideas regarding auteurism,¹⁸ in that he both writes and directs his films¹⁹ and demonstrates a distinctive theme throughout his canon of work,²⁰ however, such attitudes have long been criticised, even from their inception, with Andre Bazin cautioning against the "cult of personality".²¹ Auteur theory has been criticised for ignoring important aspects of filmmaking, perhaps most obviously film's collaborative nature and the role of industrial elements, such as production studios or distributors, in shaping a film.²² While it might no longer be fashionable to heap praise upon a single figure within the filmmaking process, there's no doubting the importance and total involvement of Dario Argento in his own work, and again as McDonagh notes, an auteurist

¹⁶ McDonagh, *Broken Mirrors, Broken Minds*, 9

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Auteurism as a theory was developed by the writers of French cinema magazine *Cahiers du Cinema*, particularly by the young François Truffaut. The concept was developed as a response to the tendency of classical French films to be literary adaptations, which the writers of *Cahiers* did not favour. The sudden availability of Hollywood films in France after the end of World War II contributed too, with American directors such as Howard Hawks and those Europeans working in Hollywood such as Hitchcock were praised for the innovations. In the Sixties Andrew Sarris further refined his ideas of *auteurism* in the pages of *Screen*, thus bringing what had been a very European idea to the attention of Hollywood.

¹⁹ Truffaut, *A Certain Tendency of the French Cinema*

²⁰ Sarris, *Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962*

²¹ Bazin, *De La Politique des Auteurs*, 26

²² For examples see Petrie, *Alternatives to Auteurs*; Schatz, *The Genius of the System*

approach is a “useful and practical” way to approach a canon of work.²³ This may not necessarily be a wholly positive account, of course, with Argento’s recent films facing negative criticism. This is often indicative of Argento being compared against his own self as auteur, his later films negatively received in light of his earlier work.

Argento’s films undoubtedly emerge from the Italian filmmaking context. The 1950s saw the rise of neo-realism, a type of filmmaking which focused on the realistic treatment of social and political content, by rejecting traditional “dramatic and cinematic conventions”.²⁴ Neo-realist films were routinely bleak or bittersweet, their meandering cameras as preoccupied with a city’s broken walls as a character’s *malaise*. Along with the *nouvelle vague* which appeared in France, Italian filmmakers pioneered what would be broadly labelled ‘art’ cinema. However, this sort of supposedly high-brow filmmaking was not the only sort of cinema emerging in Italy at the time, as the 1960s saw the emergence of the ‘spaghetti western’, which used European locations to emulate the American Wild West. Just as European art cinema would go on to inspire American filmmakers and change the face of Hollywood, the spaghetti westerns are recognisably inspired by the classical Hollywood western film. However, the spaghetti westerns feature enough unique elements that they stand out as their own cycle of films. While mimicking the iconography of Hollywood westerns, from their dusty vistas to dramatic gun battles, thematically the spaghetti westerns carved their own identity, more often than not featuring heroes who live by violence and greed, rather than resorting to it.²⁵

The emergence of the spaghetti western genre in Italy is comparable to the emergence of the horror genre, with its basis in the popular films of another filmmaking nation. While the spaghetti western capitalised on the success of the classical American western, the mass of Italian horror films which began to emerge in the 1960s very much followed the success of Terrence Fisher’s *Dracula* (1957) and the cycle of horror films released by Hammer Studios in Britain. Much like France, Italy did not have a tradition of horror in its cinema until relatively late in its history. Only in 1960 did a significant number of horror films appear in Italy, including Mario Bava’s *Black Sunday* (‘La Maschera del demonio’). Bava’s later films *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* (‘La ragazza che sapeva troppo’, 1963) and *Blood and Black Lace* (‘Sei donne per l’assassino’, 1964) were arguably the first cinematic *gialli*, presenting the viewer with a heady combination of crime drama and graphic violence. The *giallo* takes its name from the pulp paperback novels published with yellow (‘*giallo*’) covers. The comparison of the Italian

²³ McDonagh, *Broken Mirrors, Broken Minds*, 9

²⁴ Bondanella, *Italian Cinema: From Neorealism to the Present*, 31

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 255

cycles with their American and British counter-parts perhaps highlights the applicability of the Italian term *filone* when considering spaghetti westerns or horror. Mikel Koven defines *filone* as a word meaning a ‘stream’ of a larger ‘river’, that river being the concept of a particular genre.²⁶ In terms of film, *giallo* would therefore be a *filone*, while crime or horror would be the *genre*. The specific semantic elements of the giallo film – the killer’s costume, the violent set-pieces – are what make it stand out from the broader genre around it.

Argento’s own films very much followed in the footsteps of Mario Bava. Argento’s obsession with killing women earned him the nickname of the ‘Italian Hitchcock’, another filmmaker renowned for fetishising and murdering his favourite leading ladies. The women of Hitchcock’s films from the fifties onward are famous for their bloneness, which Steven Cohan describes as signifying “feminine spectacle in cinema”.²⁷ The women of Argento’s films undoubtedly function in a similar way, with female bodies often being the centre of highly violent, highly aestheticised sequences. However, as I have outlined in the introduction, this sense of spectacle is not restricted to the female characters. With the release of *Profondo Rosso* in 1975, Argento’s own style was cemented, taking what Bava had begun and creating the template for all other subsequent *giallo* films that would follow. The Argento narrative is a straight forward one: an artist witnesses a crime, investigates the crime themselves, and only when they remember a small forgotten detail will they unravel the mystery. Visually, too, his trademarks are evident, not only in the rain coat, hat and black gloves of the killer, but in the recurring motifs of fire, shattering glass, and eye violation that pervade his films.

As much as Bava influenced Argento, so Argento has influenced filmmaking in Italy and beyond. Following the release of Argento’s ‘animal trilogy’,²⁸ a myriad of similarly-titled films were released, including *Lizard in a Woman’s Skin* (‘Una lucertola con la pelle di donna’, Fulci, 1971) and *Don’t Torture a Duckling* (‘Non si sevizia un paperino’, Fulci, 1972). His work as a producer and as a mentor has also led to his mark being evident in other Italian horror films, such as the films of Lamberto Bava, such as *Demons* (‘Demoni’, 1985), and Michele Soavi, such as *The Church* (‘La Chiesa’, 1989) and *The Sect* (‘La Setta’, 1991). Outside of Italy and his influence on the *giallo*, Argento has also been cited as an influence upon filmmakers such as John Carpenter, who pays part homage to Argento with *Halloween* (1979).²⁹ That the very American subgenre of the slasher film would become one of the most

²⁶ Koven, *La Dolce Morte*, 6

²⁷ Cohan, *The Spy in the Grey Flannel Suit*, 12

²⁸ *Bird with the Crystal Plumage*, *Cat O’ Nine Tails* and *Four Flies on Grey Velvet*

²⁹ Martin, *The Critics Who Knew Too Little*, 160

popular and enduring, may say much for the effectiveness of Argento's formula. In many ways, Argento's protagonists are the forebears of Laurie Strode and her ilk, and just as they've received a re-assessment in recent years, so should Argento's protagonists, female or not. Just as the American western and the British gothic horror film influenced the development of these genres in Italy, so the Italian *giallo*, as exemplified by Bava or Argento, would go on to influence the development of the horror genre elsewhere. The great similarities between a film by Dario Argento and a slasher film are numerous, but not least of all is the use of the violent set-piece. However, while the scene of violence in the slasher film tends to be inventive but conventionally filmed, Argento's violence, at its best, employs unconventional camerawork and mise-en-scène, amongst other techniques, making the most straight-forward violence spectacular.

It is because of this that Argento's films walk a fine line between the avant-garde and the generic, being formulaic in his use of plot and iconography, yet original and inventive in his use of film language. Argento's films do not necessarily comfortably fit within one particular 'genre'. As I've discussed, many of his films fall under the *giallo* heading, but even that term can be used with an uncertain definition. Due to Argento's use of graphic violence, his films are embraced as 'horror', even when some of his films feature few semantic elements of the horror film. Joan Hawkins has written at length about the fine lines between paracinema and the art film, particularly in relation to the way the films are treated by their fans.³⁰ Argento's films do textually bear the marks of the art film, and this is most evident in his scenes of violence. Arguing in favour of Argento's films as art becomes harder as one considers his more recent, less inventive, films; however, when considering his *oeuvre* as a whole, the task is much easier. Scenes of violence are staged in such a way as to distract from the film's narrative coherence and visual rules. The violent scene in an Argento film often halts the flow of the narrative and submits the viewer to a purely visual attraction. It is not only Argento's use of the camera that fills his films with a sense of artistry less obvious, if at all present, in other genre films, but also his use of sound and music. This sort of unconventional use of film language tends not to be expected in a genre film, in the same way in which generic semantics are not expected in an art film. This blurring of the lines of art and genre in the work of Argento complicates the expected representations therein.

³⁰ See Hawkins, *Sleaze-mania, Euro-Trash and High-Art: The Place of European Art Films in American Low Culture*

Analysing Argento

It is unsurprising that the primary method of analysis in approaching Argento's body of work has been psychoanalysis. The use of flashbacks is often employed in order to explore a trauma in a character's life that isn't fully revealed until the film's climax. The traumatic event often involves sexual humiliation or perversity, and can often be coupled with violent intent or murder. This preoccupation with formative events in characters' lives understandably lends itself to a psychoanalytical analysis, the unconscious drives of the characters under scrutiny as much as the unconscious behaviours of the spectator watching the film. The emphasis on sexual trauma also lends itself to the psychoanalytical obsession with the act of intercourse, both literally and symbolically. Psychoanalysis has been rightly criticised for its lack of accommodation for the active spectator in its analyses. A psychoanalytical approach to the film spectator does not take into account any active involvement by the spectator, nor does it allow for a range of interpretations of the text in any given reading. The use of psychoanalysis in feminist film theory has uncovered a great deal of illuminating trends in mainstream cinema, however it is, again, limiting in its relationship with the spectator. While a psychoanalytical approach may indeed reveal the underlying patriarchy in some types of cinema, it cannot allow for subversive or alternative readings of the films, nor for extra-textual factors that may impact upon a reading of a film.

A major aspect of a psychoanalytical approach to the film spectator is that of the concept of 'identification'. The Freudian definition of identification does not only involve the imitation of another person's psychological state, but the assimilation of it.³¹ This idea of imitation and assimilation has greatly influenced the more general assumptions regarding identification, whereby the assumption is that identification must always involve the imitation of another person's psychological state. Christian Metz, who has written at length on the subject of semiology in cinema, additionally uses Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis to write in particular on the subject of identification and film. For Metz, the key factor to cinematic identification is that the spectator is not present on the cinema screen.³² Metz applies Lacan's mirror stage theory to cinematic spectatorship, a theory which posits that as very young children we learn to recognise ourselves in a mirror, but that the image we recognise is not an accurate reflection, but rather an idealised version of the self. This image is called the 'ego-ideal' by

³¹ Laplanche & Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, 205-208

³² Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier*, 45

Lacan.³³ Metz compares the cinema screen to a mirror, with the vital difference being that the spectator does not see herself reflected on its surface. Metz insists that the spectator must identify with someone, or else the film becomes unintelligible, believing that identification is the basis of social interaction.³⁴ Rather than claiming that the spectator identifies with a particular character, however, Metz argues that the spectator identifies with the camera. He positions the spectator as part of the apparatus that makes cinema possible, simultaneously projecting and receiving the film.³⁵ Metz goes as far as to describe identification with the camera as identification with “the author’s viewpoint”,³⁶ which naturally points to a belief in the validity of an auteurist approach to film. Metz begins to approach the idea of ‘looks’ in film, that is, the way characters look at each other, and the way the spectator in turn looks at the characters. He considers this to be secondary cinematic identification, primary identification being with the screen-as-mirror. This differs, for Metz, from purely psychoanalytical identifications, where primary identification is the primitive attachment an infant makes with others before she is able to differentiate between herself and others.³⁷

The idea of ‘the look’ is expanded by Laura Mulvey with her theory of the gaze in cinema. For Mulvey, the look of the camera, the look which Metz argues the spectator *must* identify with, is coded male. Mulvey argues that cinema is scopophilic, that is, its pleasure is derived from the opportunity to treat other people (that is, that characters on the screen), as objects, by “subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze”.³⁸ Mulvey identifies a scopophilic gaze as an active one, rendering the object of said gaze passive. In Mulvey’s argument, the gaze being male means that female characters are therefore passive. Women, according to Mulvey, are the object of an erotic gaze, while men are an active and ideal force, comparable to that of the ego-ideal of Lacan’s mirror stage.³⁹ Mulvey furthers her argument by addressing the castration anxiety that female characters cause in the males. She outlines two ways in which male characters in narrative cinema can neutralise this threat of castration: the first being the demystification and punishment of the woman, the second is the fetishisation of the woman in order to render her reassuring rather than threatening.⁴⁰ As with all psychoanalysis, Mulvey’s account of cinema does not take into account any extra-textual factors, particularly in terms of

³³ Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, 114-116

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 46

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 49

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 55

³⁷ Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier*, 56

³⁸ Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures*, 16

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 17-18

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 21-22

the spectator. She does not, for example, consider that if the spectator is female that she might derive pleasure from elsewhere in the film, nor does she allow for identification with anyone but the protagonist, who she assumes to be male or masculinised. While Mulvey's use of psychoanalysis certainly does highlight an element of objectification of women in mainstream cinema, she does little to address how this can, in turn, be subverted by the spectator.

Other theorists have criticised the lack of space in Mulvey's work for subversive readings. Carol Clover does so specifically in relation to the slasher film. The slasher film is a particularly American subgenre of the horror film, wherein teenagers are slowly killed one-by-one by a masked killer, who is eventually defeated by the remaining protagonist. Clover argues that, although the slasher film does feature the routine and scopophilic slaughter of female characters, the appeal of the slasher film lies in its hero, the Final Girl. The Final Girl is the character who from the outset appears more alert and astute than her friends, and is the one who has to suffer through their deaths before finally overcoming the killer. Clover argues that although the slasher film might favour the gaze of its killer for much of the film, at the film's climax the Final Girl controls the gaze, turning it on the killer and ending his life.⁴¹ However, the Final Girl is not a feminist triumph, according to Clover, but a small step in the right direction: while she defeats the villain, she is throughout the film portrayed as less feminine than her peers, often bearing an androgynous name, dressing demurely, and showing little interest in romance. Clover also notes how, in order to destroy the villain, the Final Girl must turn his own weapon on himself, normally a phallic object such as a knife or a machete. In order to triumph, she must become masculine through becoming phallic. Barbara Creed is another theorist to question the way in which Mulvey uses psychoanalysis to approach the way women are represented in cinema. Creed argues that, rather than serving as a passive reminder of castration, the woman is threatening to the man because she is the *castratrice*.⁴² For Creed, the slasher film not only consistently reminds the (male) viewer of her 'castrated' state, her mutilated body literally making her the "bearer of the bleeding wound",⁴³ but also, in its climax, presents the female as the castrator, by her mutilation of the killer.

Recent approaches to Argento's films have used psychoanalysis to both support and question existing views of his representation of women. Ray Guins, for example, argues for unusual gender roles in Argento's films, describing his male characters as lacking the "power and

⁴¹ Clover, *Men, Women and Chainsaws*, 21-64

⁴² Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine*, 124-128

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 126. Creed's use of Mulvey's words here is significant in that it demonstrates a different reading of the same issue, both having used a psychoanalytical approach.

authority” normally found in male characters in horror, while describing his female characters as defying simple categorisation due to their positions as both victims and killers.⁴⁴ Xavier Mendik has written extensively on Argento, and more successfully uses psychoanalysis to highlight Argento’s complicating of expected gender roles. He argues that the *giallo* itself as a type of film challenges and purposefully refuses to meet expectations of the detective genre, often through the failure of its protagonists to solve the crime they’re faced with.⁴⁵ Elsewhere, Mendik argues that the portrayal of the abject female body in Argento’s films does not, in fact, constitute a simplistic “victimised” body, but rather that it “represents a disturbing, potent and unclassifiable body that resists ideological recuperation”.⁴⁶ With this reading, Mendik reworks Argento’s use of violence against women as a tool to complicate expected gender representation. Mendik makes an effective use of psychoanalysis to make a complex and progressive reading of Argento’s female representations. Julian Hoxter offers a different psychoanalytical approach to film, by applying Melanie Klein’s object relations theory, particularly the concept of projective identification. For Klein, a defensive mechanism as a child is the splitting of good and bad phantasies, with the bad phantasies being isolated from the self and the good phantasies. Projective identification occurs when the child projects the bad phantasies onto another person or object.⁴⁷ Hoxter uses this approach to provide a complex analysis of the character of policewoman Anna Manni (Asia Argento) in *The Stendhal Syndrome*, who, following her own kidnapping and assault, begins to take on the personality of her attacker. He identifies in the work of Argento, as well as more generally in the *giallo*, a tendency to represent aggression and violence from culturally ‘good’ objects, such as family or figures of authority.⁴⁸

Psychoanalysis can provide a complex, particular reading of a film. In foregoing psychoanalysis, I do not wish to imply that it does not offer a useful approach to Argento’s body of work. Rather, I wish to employ a different method in order to uncover results that do not rely on the assumptions made by psychoanalysis. I wish for my own work to be in response to MacCormack’s timely claim that there is an obsession with female death in analyses of Argento’s films. Traditionally the feminist use of psychoanalysis has led to readings which point to the perpetuation of phallogentrism in cinema. This is particularly true in the case of horror

⁴⁴ Guins, *Tortured Looks*, 141

⁴⁵ Mendik, *Detection and Transgression*, 35

⁴⁶ Mendik, *From the Monstrous Mother to the ‘Third Sex’*, 131

⁴⁷ Alford, *Psychoanalyst of the Passions*, 29-33

⁴⁸ Hoxter, *Anna with a Devil Inside*, 103

films, even when an active role is identified in female characters. For Clover, the Final Girl's femininity is doubted; for Creed, the female is either abject or castrator, and therefore always threatening to the male. What a traditional psychoanalytical approach to gender will always achieve is the definition of the female in relation to the male – she lacks where he does not, she is passive where he is active, and so on. This is not a dichotomy that I believe to be fundamentally true, and yet it forms a core part of psychoanalytical film theory. By using a cognitive approach, I hope to redress this imbalance and approach Argento's films without such assumptions.

Clearly Dario Argento emerges from a specific national filmmaking context and generic framework. Argento becomes an interesting case study primarily due to his continual blurring and complicating of these contexts. Argento is one of the few Italian horror filmmakers who continues to consistently create films. Although his later work has not been well-received, it still attracts the attention of global audiences and relatively well-known actors. Most crucially Argento's blurring of generic lines and use of artistic devices serve to complicate expectations of his films and refuses to meet such expectations held by the spectator as they experience the film. Argento's personal contexts have been included or invoked in some analyses of his work – such as his relationship with Daria Nicolodi – particularly in debates surrounding the representation of women. I wish to avoid this in my own work, for although I identify Argento as the author of his work, I do not wish to claim to know enough of his personality from select interviews to guess at what influence this might have on his films. As well as demonstrating the influences of these many contexts, Argento's work is important to consider as an influence on others. Although, as I have hopefully demonstrated, psychoanalysis has allowed for rich and varied readings of Argento's work, for the purpose of analysing the work afresh there are two aspects of a psychoanalytical approach that are problematic, in my view; the lack of space for active spectatorial engagement, and the fundamental positioning of the female in relation to the male. As a result, my own analysis of his work will employ a cognitive approach, which I hope can allow for an active engagement with Argento's aesthetics as well as his characters. I will outline this method in the next chapter, as well as analyse two sequences from *Tenebrae*.

Chapter Two

“Why do you despise women so much?”

The Camera in *Tenebrae*

An alternative to a psychoanalytical approach to film is cognitivism. Cognitive film theory developed as a response to classical and post-structuralist film theory, including psychoanalysis and semiotics. Cognitive film theory undertakes a more scientific approach to understanding film texts and the spectator's understanding of the text. This scientific approach becomes clearest in cognitivism's application of structured models of understanding to particular films. As opposed to psychoanalysis' consideration of the spectator's unconscious responses to film, cognitivism takes into account the active mental processes the spectator must employ in order to understand and make meaning of a film text. An example of this is David Bordwell's application of schemata theory to film, wherein he outlines the various schema used by spectators to comprehend film language and make meaning.⁴⁹ While some cognitive film theorists reject outright other modes of film analysis, others, such as Warren Buckland, encourage the incorporation of other theoretical modes with cognitivism. Buckland, for example, believes the melding of cognitivism with semiotics is a productive approach to film in that it allows a development of semiotic-linguistic film theory by allowing for the spectator to play an active role in interpreting the signs and the language.⁵⁰ Cognitive film theory has developed so that it takes greater consideration of the role that emotions play in the understanding of the film text, which takes another step closer to allowing for the importance the individual spectator plays in making film meaning.

A term of contention with regard to cinematic spectatorship is that of 'identification'. A term that is as easily thrown into casual conversation as it is into academic criticism, a lack of clear definition makes the concept problematic. Noël Carroll criticises the term on account of its fallacy of emotional duplication from the film character to the spectator. He argues that the spectator's emotional experience in watching a film is not symmetrical to that of the protagonist or character, but rather asymmetrical, being that if we fear for a character's safety as she is stalked by a killer, she may be blissfully unaware of her stalker and rather than feeling frightened, feels quite content.⁵¹ As the process most commonly referred to by the term identification does not involve emotional duplication, an alternative term offered by Carl

⁴⁹ Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, 31-37

⁵⁰ Buckland, *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film*, 1-25

⁵¹ Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror*, 88-96

Plantinga is that of engagement. He argues that rather than the spectator ‘losing herself’ to a character on the screen, there are multiple and various ways in which she might engage with a character, including negative or indifferent responses.⁵² From this, Plantinga develops his concept of the scene of empathy in film. He defines two processes that are central to empathy: imagining how another might feel, and having feelings that are congruent to those imagined in another. Unlike some definitions of empathy, and similarly some definitions of identification, this does not require the duplication or sharing of emotions, but rather requires a shared experience.⁵³ Plantinga identifies the importance of the face in communicating emotion. A scene of empathy, for Plantinga, is when the face is used not only to communicate the emotion that a character is feeling, but to elicit emotion in the spectator.⁵⁴

For my own analysis, I will be applying a particular cognitive approach to Argento’s work. Murray Smith is another who shows a preference for ‘engagement’ as a suitable alternative to ‘identification’. Smith outlines two ways in which a spectator may engage with a character, by either being aligned with them, allied with them, or, as it often the case, aligned and allied with different characters in any given film. Smith outlines the way in which a film’s narrative guides the spectator to be aligned with a certain character or characters. The two key functions that facilitate this process are spatio-temporal attachment and subjective access to the character. Spatio-temporal attachment is the time spent during the narrative with a particular character and in their environment. Put simply, to be aligned with a character, the spectator must have a greater spatio-temporal attachment to them than other characters.⁵⁵ The subjective access to a character is how much psychological information about a character is given to the spectator, through access to their internal states.⁵⁶

Perhaps the most immediately obvious way in which Argento’s films veer from the generic to art is through his use of camerawork. Argento does not simply show the spectator acts of violence, he revels in them, shooting them in such a way as to render them aesthetically pleasing. The high level of artifice on display in Argento’s films serves as a reminder that what appears on screen is fiction, and the way those fictions are put together is artistic. *Tenebrae*, Argento’s return to the *giallo* following his initial foray into the supernatural, epitomises Argento’s highly conspicuous directorial style, not only through the camera’s movements, but

⁵² Plantinga, *The Scene of Empathy*, 244-245

⁵³ Ibid., 245-247

⁵⁴ Ibid., 247-249

⁵⁵ Smith, *Engaging Characters*, 146-149

⁵⁶ Ibid., 150-152

the objects and events it records. A psychoanalytical approach seeks to find symbols and specific meaning in the images the camera shows us, which in turn impacts upon engagement with the text. To approach an analysis of Argento's films cognitively allows for this obsession with the aesthetic to provide spectatorial pleasure which does not necessarily impact upon character engagement. I have already touched upon Gunning's "cinema of attractions,"⁵⁷ which is possibly best exemplified by the films of Georges Méliès. Méliès declared that the narrative (the "scenario," "fable" or "tale") "has no importance, since I use it merely as a pretext for 'stage effects,' the 'trick' or a nicely arranged tableaux,"⁵⁸ a quote which could easily be attributed to Argento, whose work is not known for its "character motivation, causal logic, or plot plausibility,"⁵⁹ but rather for its spectacle.

Tenebrae is a knowing, self-referential homage to the *giallo*, at once a parody of the genre and a suspenseful thriller in its own right. In the film, crime author Peter Neal (Anthony Franciosa) is forced to play detective when a woman is found dead with pages from his latest novel in her mouth. Although a great many of Argento's films have faced criticism for their violent content, *Tenebrae* would perhaps become the most infamous of all, for its inclusion on the so-called Video Nasties list in Britain in the Eighties and its heavy-handed censorship in the USA. Its opening murder sees a female shoplifter stalked by a vagrant, only to be attacked in her home by an unknown assailant, and have pages from the book she stole shoved into her mouth before she has her throat cut. *Tenebrae*'s most famous sequence appears later in the film when a journalist and her lover are spectacularly murdered in their home, a sequence which includes a two-and-a-half minute crane shot over the outside of their apartment building. Narratively superfluous but visually stunning, the shot extends and builds up the sequence so that the eventual acts of violence are all the more effective. The scene is in-keeping with Kristin Thompson's concept of cinematic excess, which outlines the scenes in a film which are unmotivated by narrative and stylistically unrealistic.⁶⁰ Both of these sequences have been criticised for eroticising female death, presumably particularly due to the fact that each of the women are in various states of undress in the scenes.⁶¹

In the first sequence, Elsa Manni (Ania Pieroni) is shown being caught shoplifting a copy of the novel *Tenebrae*, and getting away with the theft by propositioning the shop detective with

⁵⁷ See Gunning, *The Cinema of Attractions*, 162-164

⁵⁸ Cited in Gunning, 161

⁵⁹ Dillfrient, *A Film is Being Beaten*, 73

⁶⁰ Thompson, *The Concept of Cinematic Excess*, 54-62

⁶¹ See Wood, 58

sexual favours.⁶² Later, Elsa is shown walking down a street where she's grabbed by a tramp. She kicks him down and runs to her apartment building's gate, and narrowly escapes the tramp who has chased her. She runs to her building as he shouts that he'll kill her. A high mid-shot shows Elsa enter her apartment and tracks alongside her as she moves into her bedroom. She is framed in close-up at her window, which she opens, and briefly speaks with a neighbour. The camera once more tracks alongside her as she goes to her bathroom, framing the doorway as she enters. The light in the bathroom goes out and Elsa reappears, wearing only her blouse. She leaves the room, and the next shot is a mid-shot of Elsa trying to use the phone, which does not work. A close-up shows the tramp staring at her through a window, and she is shown jumping backwards, away from the window. As she stares at the tramp, a hand appears from behind and grabs her. She is shown being slammed against the wall, then a close-up is shown of a razor being held at her throat. Several shots are shown of pages being ripped from the copy of *Tenebrae*, intercut with shots of the pages being forced into Elsa's mouth. Elsa's attack is also intercut with shots of the tramp at the window, until he is shown running away. A close-up shot shows a razor being lifted into the air, which is followed by a close-up of Elsa's eyes, a close-up of the razor being wielded, a close-up of bloodied book pages, and a close-up of Elsa's eyes as she falls out of frame. The sequence ends with a mid-shot of Elsa on the ground, bloodied, intercut with close-ups of a camera, and an obscured mid-shot through the window, where the outline of the killer is discernable but not identifiable.

Up to this point in the film, the spectator has been as aligned with Elsa as they have with Peter Neal, the protagonist. This is particularly true as far as subjective access is concerned. The spectator has been shown Peter travelling to an airport and boarding a plane, with some difficulty, but they have watched Elsa try and fail to steal a book, proposition a man and be assaulted by a tramp. Though Elsa does not appear to be a particularly morally upstanding character, she is far from unlikeable, and her brief conversation with a neighbour functions to confirm this. Therefore the spectator is both spatio-temporally attached to Elsa and through her variously fearful, yet resourceful, encounters – shoplifting and being attacked – they are also given a great deal of a subjective access to her character. These two elements are outlined by Smith as vital to successful alignment with a character. A spectator may not like Elsa – they may find her sexualised resourcefulness repulsive, for example – but Argento wants them to be aligned with her. This is particularly achieved through the very brief conversation with a neighbour, which not only increases the spatio-temporal attachment to Elsa, as well as the

⁶² See Appendix A for figures from this sequence.

suspense, but also adds a sympathetic element to her character: Elsa is a nice, regular girl. The surprise of her attack – from an intruder, rather than the tramp – is effective thanks to our alignment with her character.⁶³ Were the spectator not aligned with Elsa, they would not be so shocked (if they are shocked at all) by the attack made upon her. The attack itself is mostly shot in close-ups, which serves to give a sense of immediacy to the action. This is not to say that the close-ups are of particularly *graphic* violence – not once do we see the razor’s blade cut through flesh – however, there is an emphasis upon Elsa’s face, and it is through the associations established between repeated shots (the killer’s hands/Elsa’s face) that the force of the violence is made most evident.⁶⁴ Smith notes that performance plays a role in effective subjective access,⁶⁵ and similarly the closeness of the camera to Elsa’s face, allows for the easiest alignment, by emphasising her fear and suffering.⁶⁶ This is not to say that a spectator will not derive perverse pleasure from Elsa’s murder, rather, it is to say that such a pleasure is not inherently offered by the text.

A scene which further demonstrates Argento’s experimental camerawork and a scene which is one of Argento’s most (in)famous is one which greatly emphasises the artifice of his work. Later in the film, when Peter arrives in Rome, he meets with Tilde (Mirella D’Angelo), a friend and journalist who challenges his depiction of violence in his books, particularly the violence toward women. Tilde is shown to be a lesbian, whose bisexual lover takes a man home for the night. Later, Tilde is shown arriving home. The entrance to her bedroom is framed beside the large staircase.⁶⁷ Her lover, Marion,⁶⁸ appears at the top of the stairs while Tilde stands in her doorway, where they argue. Tilde throws a vase at Marion, and the camera pans left to follow her into her room. Tilde throws a pair of scissors across the room and hears a strange noise. She turns to face the window behind her, and the film’s theme music begins. The camera

⁶³ Extra-textual factors bear an influence upon the purpose and construction of this scene. The casting of Ania Pieroni as Elsa is significant, as she would be familiar to Italian genre fans, thanks to her previous roles in Argento’s own *Inferno* and Lucio Fulci’s *The House by the Cemetery* (*Quella villa accanto al cimitero*, 1981). Bearing this in mind, this scene might almost be seen as a vague reference to *Psycho* (Hitchcock, 1960), wherein the supposed protagonist, played by a familiar actress, is murdered early in the film. The emphasis on Elsa’s eyes in this scene further strengthens this comparison. Considering that *Tenebrae* is a highly referential text, it is not unreasonable to read Elsa’s death as an homage to Hitchcock. It can also be seen as a reference to Argento’s debut, *Bird with the Crystal Plumage*, which features a scene where a woman has underwear shoved into her mouth before she is killed.

⁶⁴ Not that violence need be graphic to be effective, of course – the violation of Elsa through the aggressive filling of her mouth with pages of paper is striking and shocking enough.

⁶⁵ Smith, *Engaging Characters*, 151

⁶⁶ This is, essentially, an example of Plantinga’s ‘scene of empathy’, as outlined in Chapter One.

⁶⁷ See Appendix B for figures from this sequence.

⁶⁸ Tilde’s lover is not named in the film, but IMDb credits the actress who plays the character, Mirella Banti, as ‘Marion’, as does Alan Jones in *Profondo Argento*.

tracks in after her as she walks toward the window, before cutting to a shot from outside the window, looking in at Tilde as she opens the curtains and looks out. This is the beginning of the two-and-a-half minute crane shot which pulls away from the window before travelling up the side of the building and showing Marion in her room as it travels upward. It moves across the roof and down the other side of the building, past windows which show the stairwell which will prove central to the set piece which is about to occur. The camera stops at a lower, shuttered window, where a gloved hand uses large pliers to cut through the shutters and gain entry to the building. Then, we are shown Tilde in close-up, shouting at Marion to turn down the music. She then hears a voice whispering the words “pervert...filthy, slimy pervert!” She turns around and removes her top and as she puts on a new one, a gloved hand enters the frame and grabs her. A razor is shown in close-up, followed by Tilde’s arms in the air, another shot of the razor, a close-up of Tilde’s top being slashed open to reveal her surprised face, a brief shot of Tilde’s point of view of the killer’s torso, then a close-up of her face being splattered with blood. Her bloodied arm strikes glass behind her as she screams, and a vase falls over, shown smashed in close-up. This cuts to a mid-shot of Marion in her room, who switches off her music, rendering the soundtrack silent. She hears a noise and leaves the room. The camera tracks at her side as she goes down some of the stairs and calls for Tilde. A close-up shot shows a bulb being broken with a razor. Marion goes further down the stairs, and the camera adopts her point of view which shows a reflection of Tilde, dead, in a glass panel on the stairway. A mid-shot shows Marion scream and turn, and a different piece of music begins on the soundtrack, one associated with character death. The camera is at her back as she runs away and a hand enters the frame and attacks her back with the razor. A mid-shot shows Marion on the floor, struggling to move away. She is then framed through one of the stairway’s glass panels, and the killer slits her throat, causing her head to smash through the panel toward the camera. This cuts to a shot taken from the stairs, which pans backward past Marion’s head and into Tilde’s room, centrally framing her. The scene ends with a close-up of the camera’s flash bulb, a zoom into a close-up of a camera’s viewfinder, and the mid-shot of Tilde’s body, accompanied by a camera’s shutter sound on the soundtrack.

What is most notable about this sequence is its intentional, effective confusion of the spectator, which is achieved both through the lengthy crane shot and its use of music. The crane shot begins as though it is a point of view shot, ‘backing away’ from the window as Tilde looks out.⁶⁹ As the camera scales the side of the building there is still the possibility that the spectator is

⁶⁹ Which is not dissimilar to a shot used in the scene from *Suspiria* I will be looking at in chapter four.

being shown an exaggerated, stylised point of view, particularly as it slows its movement to linger at Marion's window. However, when the shot ends to reveal the killer gaining entry to the building it becomes very clear that this shot did not represent the point of view of an intruder. Many readings of this shot deem it technically brilliant but ultimately meaningless.⁷⁰ However, given Argento's preoccupation with the aesthetic, and his consistent use of misleading points of view, particularly points-of-view which are unattributable, it might be worthwhile to consider that Argento's own point of view might be present in his films. Argento's use of point of view shots is often used to support arguments that he is misogynistic or sadistic. Ray Guins argues that Argento's unattributable point of view shots in fact belong to "other characters and unknown voyeurs".⁷¹ Guins' claim seems weak, having already argued that Argento's camera is phallogentric, only by making vague references to Argento's "directorial intention" and by quoting Argento's famous 'beautiful women' comment.⁷² That his argument for Argento's phallogentricism is based more firmly in Argento's own personality than his film texts points to a lack of textual evidence to support claims for a phallogentric camera.

As far as Argento's use of unattributable point of view shots is concerned, given his obsession with cinematic artifice and conspicuousness it seems more reasonable to presume that Argento's camera is given its own point of view, drawing attention to the fact that the camera is present in the film world. I would argue that his conspicuous use of the camera points to his preoccupation with the aesthetic and the spectacular above narrative logic or meaning. Argento's death scenes have been compared to the song-and-dance number in musicals, particularly classical musicals.⁷³ The function of these scenes is pure spectacle, which halts the narrative flow of the film. This is very true of Argento's work, particularly in the case of the crane shot. Just as song-and-dance numbers are expected in a musical, so extended, violent scenes are expected of a horror film or a *giallo*. As a director known for his technical experimentation, it is unsurprising that such showy camerawork should be incorporated. The correlation of the violent spectacle of Argento's work with the musical number is perhaps underscored by the highly choreographed nature of such scenes, which is not only achieved by the performers and the way they're framed, but also by the way the whole sequence is cut together, something I will explore more closely in the next chapter.

⁷⁰ Gracey, *Dario Argento*, 88; McDonagh, *Broken Mirrors, Broken Minds*, 185

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 147

⁷² Guins, 144, 147

⁷³ See Koven, *La Dolce Morte*, 127; McDonagh, *Broken Mirrors, Broken Dreams*, 23

It is not just the camerawork that functions in such a way as to confuse the spectator in this scene. The way music is used in this particular sequence also plays with the expectations of the spectator, an aspect I will explore at greater length in chapter four. In particular sequence of *Tenebrae*, the music begins just prior to the crane shot and continues throughout, the fullest rendition of the main theme heard so far. It continues when we return to Tilde, only for her to shout at Marion to “turn it down!” Marion is later shown taking the needle from the record on her player and the music stops. What begins as and behaves as non-diegetic soundtrack music – it begins unheralded and varies in volume – is revealed to be diegetic. This challenges the expectations and function of the music in the scene, as well as complicating its use elsewhere in the film. It is mostly used to accompany the crane shot along the outside of the building, and therefore seems to be incidental music to an otherwise uneventful, albeit interesting, shot. This confused diegesis seems to support the film’s self-referencing and its knowing parodying of *giallo* conventions. That the sequence ends with the zoom into a close-up of a camera’s viewfinder supports the film’s consistent references to mechanical reproduction and art. As James Gracey astutely notes, at the film’s close when Peter Neal fakes his own death with a trick razor, we are reminded that the horrors we witness in the film are precisely as fake.⁷⁴

Both of these scenes demonstrate the two sorts of narration outlined by Smith as facilitating different sorts of alignment. The ‘detective narration’ almost exclusively aligns the spectator with a single character, with intermittent moments which break from this alignment to either modulate our subjective access to the character or to align us elsewhere, which either forces the spectator to be one step behind or one step ahead of the protagonist.⁷⁵ The ‘melodramatic narration’, or ‘expressive tradition’ is the use of multiple attachments to characters and a high level of subjective transparency throughout a narrative, resulting in the spectator always knowing more than any given character, and being aligned with several.⁷⁶ Smith notes that most films will use both approaches in order to modulate the sort of alignment on offer to the spectator, and this is the case with *Tenebrae*. The sequence in which Elsa is killed offers a sort of microcosmic detective narration, in that we are wholly aligned with Elsa, which, as I have outlined, makes her murder more shocking for the surprise of the intruder’s presence in her home. Meanwhile the sequence which sees Tilde and Marion killed, in some respects, does the opposite, with its lengthy shot of the outside of their home revealing to the spectator the presence of an intruder and the danger which is sure to face them. This isn’t strictly speaking a

⁷⁴ Gracey, *Dario Argento*, 91

⁷⁵ Smith, *Engaging Characters*, 153

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 153-154

‘melodramatic’ narration, as we are not aligned with the intruder in any way, but it functions in a similar manner, to provide the spectator with more knowledge than the characters with whom they’re aligned.

Tenebrae’s famous flashback sequence, involving red high-heeled shoes, has been the centre of much of the application of psychoanalysis to Argento’s work. Psychoanalysis is particularly useful to the flashback sequences and their function within the film’s narrative, however, to repeatedly apply psychoanalysis across the film in its entirety will always mean that certain elements are overlooked and alternative readings are less visible, particularly in relation to spectatorship. In presuming that a spectator’s engagement occurs unconsciously, psychoanalysis ignores the spectator’s ability to consider and take into account extra-textual knowledge of the film, for example, or a spectator’s familiarity with a director’s work. Psychoanalysis cannot take into account the highly reflexive nature of a work such as *Tenebrae*, and to ignore it, in some respects, is to miss the point Argento makes with the film, which is, arguably, to parody some of the criticisms he has faced as a director. It is no mistake that the scene which sees Tilde and Marion killed ends with a zoom into the viewfinder of a camera, emphasising the role of reproduction and direction in the creation of such a scene. With *Tenebrae*, Argento challenges the spectator to engage with a film packed with artifice and representations of the role of the director. This challenge can only be met and fully engaged with through prior knowledge of Argento’s work and an understanding of his role as the film’s *auteur*. What a cognitive approach to *Tenebrae* allows for is the alignment of the spectator with the film’s aestheticised victims.

A cognitive approach to film posits structured models of understanding to spectatorship, allowing for the spectators to take an active role in engagement. Engagement is a preferred term to ‘identification,’ as it allows for interaction with the film without implying the occurrence of emotional duplication. In this study I am specifically employing Smith’s concept of alignment to my textual analyses. This concept outlines how a film text offers a character or characters as a point of alignment to the spectator. The use of the camera in *Tenebrae* encourages alignment with particular characters due to spatio-temporal attachment. It also functions to confuse the diegesis through the use of implied point of view shots which are, in fact, often no character’s perspective. *Tenebrae* achieves a strange combination of alienation and confusion with effective alignment, where the spectator is encouraged to sympathise with characters that are also distanced, through the killer’s treatment of them. In the next chapter I will outline the function

of editing in Argento's films in contributing to this, by analysing a key sequence from *Terror at the Opera*.

Chapter Three

“This isn’t one of your crummy movies!”

Editing Terror at the Opera

The deaths of Elsa, Tilde and Marion in *Tenebrae* are expertly constructed, highly structured events. They are, in some respects, conspicuous in their overly structured choreography, as the spectator is shown shot after fetishised shot of the victim’s bodies, intercut with shots of the equally as fetishised razor of the killer.⁷⁷ As well as being an effective series of shock cuts,⁷⁸ whereby the spectator, on first viewing the scene, is faced with the images of Elsa’s oral violation, Tilde’s bloodied face, or Marion’s throat being cut; such sequences earn Argento further comparisons to choreographed dance, his “blood ballets” remaining “unparalleled in the history of horror”.⁷⁹ So far then, not only does Argento employ experimental and unconventional camerawork to create moments of spectacle in his films, but he also achieves it through his use of editing. Franco Fraticelli is Argento’s most frequent collaborator, having edited nine films directed,⁸⁰ and several produced⁸¹, by Argento. Editing serves to emphasise and underline that which is achieved through performance and camerawork. The cutting process creates associations and relationships between characters and objects or other characters. In turn, this contributes to construction of an alignment with a particular character.

In outlining his concept of alignment, Smith pays particular attention to the role of the point of view shot, and outlines the particular way in which point of view shots can be used. Rather than being central to ‘identification’ with a character, as is often assumed, the use of a point of view shot in actuality limits the subjectivity available to the spectator due to the absence of that particular character’s facial expression from the screen. The point of view shot rather functions as a way of marking alignment, to emphasise a change of alignment from one character to another, and also in the restriction of narration, by limiting our knowledge of a particular

⁷⁷ Argento’s frequent fetishisation of the killer’s arsenal is perhaps more evident in his other films, particularly *Profondo Rosso*, where several sequences incorporate loving close-up pans across a collection of knives, ropes and children’s toys.

⁷⁸ David Scott Diffrient defines the shock cut as “a sudden, violent eruption or peak moment in a film narrative” (‘A Film is Being Beaten’, 52), citing examples such as the removal of the Phantom’s mask in *The Phantom of the Opera* (Julian, 1925), Carrie’s apparent return to life at the close of De Palma’s film (1976), or even from *Tenebrae* itself, when near the climax of the film, Jane (Veronica Lario), waits in her apartment, only to have her arm chopped off; the resultant blood painting a vibrant spray of red against a plain white wall.

⁷⁹ Diffrient, *A Film is Being Beaten*, 73

⁸⁰ *Bird with the Crystal Plumage*, *Cat O’ Nine Tails*, *La Cinque Giornate* (1973), *Profondo Rosso*, *Suspiria*, *Inferno*, *Tenebrae*, *Phenomena* and *Terror at the Opera*.

⁸¹ *Demons*, *The Church*, *The Sect* and *Dellamorte Dellamore* (Soavi, 1994).

character.⁸² This limitation is only true in the case of a direct point of view shot, wherein the supposed point of view of a given character is emulated in the film, through the use of a handheld camera, for example, or the obscuring of the shot with other characters or objects. This sort of point of view shot is often accompanied by sound effects, such as breathing, in order to emphasise that the shot is meant to be recreating a character's direct point of view. In Argento's films, as with a great number of horror films, this sort of point of view is ordinarily used to portray the film's killer or villain, which functions to include them as a character in the film's action without revealing their identity. Point of view can also be indicated through the use of editing. Editing is used to represent a character's point of view through the shot reverse shot, invariably showing the character's face and the object of their attention. Smith argues that one of the uses of this sort of point of view shot is in order to emphasise the alignment with a particular character, not by providing direct access to their perspective, but by providing a greater level of subjective access to their mental state.⁸³

Terror at the Opera (1987) is an example of Argento's later *gialli*, this time set in the world of classical music, where the ingénue Betty (Cristina Marsillach) is thrust into the lead role of Verdi's *Macbeth*, drawing the attention of a psychopath who starts killing people she knows. The film's central image of needles taped under Betty's eyes, forcing them open, has long been discussed for its supposed commentary on spectatorship. Striking though the image is, the way it is cut together with the rest of the film is what gives the image its lasting and cumulative effect upon the spectator. The central conceit of *Terror at the Opera* is that opera star Betty is forced by a serial killer to watch as he murders. The first instance of this occurs early in the film, following Betty's debut success.⁸⁴ She and Stefano, the stage manager, go to bed, but she does not have sex with him. Stefano briefly leaves the room to make some tea. Betty is framed in a mid-shot as she sits on the bed. She looks around her as a heartbeat is heard on the soundtrack. The side of her head is shown in close-up when a gloved hand appears and covers her mouth, muffling her as she tries to scream. She briefly passes out and her mouth is covered with tape, and her wrists bound with rope. A wide-shot of the room shows the bed, but the view of Betty and the killer is obscured by a pillar. A close-up shot shows Betty struggling against her bonds, and we are briefly shown her point of view of the opposite wall. The killer is shown locking the bedroom door and Betty is shown struggling again and rolling off the bed. The killer's point of view is then given, as the camera shows Betty's face in close up as the killer

⁸² Smith, *Engaging Characters*, 156-165

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ See Appendix C for figures from this sequence.

pushes her toward the pillar. Several close-up shots are shown of the killer tying a rope around Betty and the pillar. A close-up shot of Betty's face includes the killer's hands showing her needles attached to some sticky tape. A closer shot shows the tape being attached beneath Betty's eyes, which is intercut with extreme close-up shots of the needles in front of Betty's eyes. The killer shows Betty her eyes in a mirror, and explains to her that she cannot close them without damaging them. Then, we cut to a mid-shot of the bedroom door and hear Stefano's voice asking why it's locked. A close-up of Betty's face shows she is agitated, and her point of view is shown as Stefano enters the room. Mid-shots of Betty tied to the pillar are intercut with similarly-framed shots of Stefano walking toward her. Betty keeps screaming, although her voice is muffled. A shot from over Betty's shoulder shows Stefano reach her, only to be stabbed in the jaw, the blade of the knife shown in extreme close-up in his mouth. Rock music begins to play on the soundtrack, as Betty's eyes are shown in close-up, followed by a close-up of Stefano's face as the killer removes the knife. Briefly Stefano's point of view is shown, having fallen to the floor, which frames Betty in the background, while the hooded killer looms over him. Close-up shots of Betty's eyes are shown intercut with Stefano being repeatedly and bloodily knifed. Eventually he is framed in the same mid-shot, only he is now dead, as the killer holds up his head for Betty to see, indicated by a close-up shot of her eyes, followed by her direct point of view. Close-up shots show the killer's hand touching Betty's torso as he tells her she's a "bitch on heat". Then a knife is shown cutting at the rope that ties Betty to the pillar, followed by another close-up of her eyes. A mid-shot then frames Betty as she struggles free of the rope and removes the needles from beneath her eyes. The scene ends with a mid-shot of her legs as she runs past Stefano's dead body.

Much has been made of this scene, and Betty's forced complicity with the murderer. While it is Stefano who is murdered, Betty is the targeted victim of the attacker. The murderer does not simply force Betty to watch, he makes it impossible for her *not* to watch. To approach this scene with Mulvey's theory of the gaze in cinema, would reveal much regarding the sadistic nature of the male gaze, which is forced upon Betty, therefore when the spectator is shown her point of view, it is coded male as she is not looking of her own free will. A psychoanalytical approach to *Terror at the Opera* has proven useful, particularly given the film's themes of voyeurism and sadism. However, with regard to gender, this sort of psychoanalytical reading will always position the female as either passive or threatening. Betty is either passive because she is forced to watch, or she is threatening (and therefore punished) because of her failure/refusal to have sex, which is often referenced in the film's dialogue.

To offer an alternative reading, employing Smith's theory to the outlined scene, reveals a clear alignment with Betty. To once more focus on Smith's assertion that subjective access is central to successful alignment, the repeated close-ups and extreme close-ups of Betty's eyes are a way of allowing the spectator access to her fear. To also take into account Plantiga's ideas regarding the scene of empathy, the cutting between Betty's eyes and Stefano being stabbed prolongs the subjective access - by showing Betty's face and the scene she is reacting to - past the point of conveying information.⁸⁵ Betty's fear should illicit similar feelings in the spectator. Argento's inspiration for the needles under the eyes motif is said to come from his annoyance at some spectators' refusal to watch his gory scenes.⁸⁶ Through aligning the spectator with Betty, Argento is forcing them, or challenging them, to keep watching. The repeated use of Betty's point of view in this sequence not only emphasises the killer's attack on her, but also the spectator's alignment with her. Shots which include needles in front of the camera's lens, to mimic Betty's vision, briefly break from the spectator's subjective access to her. However, these point of view shots provide an extra detail for when the spectator is returned to close-up shots of Betty's face, making it easier to imagine what it might be like to be in her position.

Due to its obvious theme and portrayal of voyeurism, it is unsurprising that *Terror at the Opera* has been the only film by Argento to have been singled out as providing an alternative approach to spectatorship. Primary amongst these is Steven Shaviro, who briefly uses *Terror at the Opera* as an exemplar of a film problematising concepts of the gaze and spectatorship. Shaviro notes that although Betty, in the scenes in which she is forced to watch murder committed, is portrayed as overtly appalled and frightened - and, therefore, presumably that the spectator will feel similarly - the scenes also feature a latent "erotic thrill" that such crimes are being committed for her.⁸⁷ Shaviro describes *Terror at the Opera* as ambiguously blurring the traditional male/female and active/passive polarities.⁸⁸ Shaviro goes on to argue, once more through *Terror at the Opera*, that it is wrong to term Argento's films - and horror films like his - as "misogynistic" because the spectator is invested in the "very bodies being dismembered".⁸⁹ Ultimately, this concept too fails to point out, or does not realise, the relative equality between male and female death in Argento's films. However, Shaviro's claim that Argento's "hyperbolic aestheticisation" ultimately serves to "destabilise any fixed relations of power"⁹⁰ is applicable

⁸⁵ Plantiga, *The Scene of Empathy*, 249-250

⁸⁶ Gracey, *Dario Argento*, 104-105

⁸⁷ Shaviro, *The Cinematic Body*, 50

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Shaviro, *The Cinematic Body*, 61

⁹⁰ Ibid.

across his body of work and points to a need to approach Argento's work from a non-gender biased aesthetic stand point. Following on from Shaviro, Adam Knee has also used *Terror at the Opera* as an example of Argento's work problematising traditional views of spectatorship in horror. Knee keenly points out that even in Shaviro's work there is some neglect of the great level of gender ambiguity in Argento's films, to the point that it is only retrospectively, having viewed the film, that the spectator is aware that the killer in *Terror at the Opera* is male at all.⁹¹ This ambiguity is perhaps strengthened by the conceit's similarity to that of Argento's first film, *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*, which features a killer who is eventually revealed to be female.

The spectator's alignment with Betty persists throughout the film, and not solely in scenes which see her attacked. Having sought comfort with Marc (Ian Charleson) following the murder of Stefano, Betty is left alone in her apartment. She sits on her bed and a long shot stays with her as she calls out, thinking someone is in the apartment with her. She answers her phone, only for there to be no response from the caller. She chastises herself for taking a role in *Macbeth*, which she believes to be unlucky. The spectator spends a long time with Betty simply worrying for herself, until the scene ends with a handheld shot from outside Betty's room, which implies another person's point of view. On the soundtrack a child's voice is heard, saying "Don't cry, Betty." Presumably the voice is that of Betty's young neighbour, who reappears later in the film and helps Betty escape her apartment when trapped with the killer. This time spent with Betty, even through the use of another character's point of view, sympathetically aligns the spectator with her, the child's instruction of 'don't cry' unheard, but implicit of the sympathy required toward Betty. During scenes which see Betty captured and rendered voyeur, the rapid intercutting of Betty's eyes and face with the scene of murder intensifies the alignment and the sympathy.

This intensification of alignment corresponds with the moments in the film which can be considered spectacular. Betty is already a 'spectacular' character due to her position as an opera singer; she is a component part of the operatic spectacle, along with her co-stars, the music, the costumes, the ravens and the set design. She is as on display when she performs as Lady *Macbeth* as she is when she is tied-up and forced to watch the killer's crimes, the only difference being her free will: it is her choice to be an opera singer; it is not her choice to be the killer's consort in sadomasochism. Having said this, it is worth noting Betty's reticence to play the role ("I'm too young!") and her continued belief in the bad luck caused by staging a

⁹¹ Knee, *Gender, Genre, Argento*, 217

performance of Macbeth. This element of unease in her professional role underlines a greater parallel with her position as both spectacle and voyeur. This is particularly true in the case of the second sequence of Betty's assault, wherein she is bound to a pillar inside a costume display cabinet. Perhaps even more pointedly, the scene takes place as Betty joins Julia (Argento regular Coralina Cataldi-Tassoni), the wardrobe mistress, in fixing her costume which has been sabotaged by the killer the night before. Significantly, the killer has lost a gold bracelet, which Julia finds on the costume, and is determined to retrieve it, thus facilitating the entire sequence. The connection between Betty as Lady Macbeth and Betty as victim is underscored by the setting of the scene. While positioning Betty within the costume cabinet may be a means to demonstrate Betty's "powerlessness,"⁹² it also serves to further the parallel between the forms of display forced upon her: the role of Lady Macbeth, and as the killer's play-thing. Betty is unusual, although not unique, in Argento's canon as a protagonist who is targeted directly throughout the film by the killer, a tendency seen more in his later films than his earlier work. Regardless, her position as spectacle is more broadly applicable to Argento's protagonists, who are, very often, artists (writers, musicians, dancers). Through the formal construction of his work, Argento underlines his characters' positions as spectacular through their occupations. In his earlier work this is perhaps clearest in *Suspiria*, where the characters are mostly dance students, training for a life's work of spectacle.

The editing of Argento's films contributes greatly to the spectacular nature of their most violent scenes. Combined with the showmanship of Argento's camerawork, the precise editing of spectacular sequences often highlights the obviously choreographed nature of such scenes. In *Terror at the Opera* the use of rapid editing serves to emphasise spectatorial alignment with Betty through repeated close-ups of her face and an emphasis on her point of view, which provides the spectator with subjective access to her. Her point of view is achieved through the cross-cutting of shots of Betty with shots of the scene she is witnessing. This is emphasised through brief shots of Betty's direct point of view. This sense of alignment with the victims is noted by the likes of Shaviro and Knee as problematising traditional notions of spectatorship. Another formal element of Argento's films which is key to this problematisation is music and sound, which is often an overlooked aspect of his work. In the next chapter I will analyse this integral element through an analysis of a sequence from *Suspiria*.

⁹² Hunt, *A Sadistic Night at the Opera*, 334

Chapter Four

“I’m blind, not deaf, you get it? Not deaf!”

The Sounds of *Suspiria*

What *Terror at the Opera* lacks that other films by Argento feature is a more refined use of the soundtrack. The killer is always indicated on the soundtrack before he appears on screen, through the use of a heartbeat sound effect. This is the only sort of aural cuing used in the film, as music is used only when it has become visually evident that a character is being killed. Visual cuing occurs, however, as the heartbeat sound effect is often coupled with a visual tremor of the frame or images of the killer’s pulsating brain. The only musical leitmotif in *Terror at the Opera* is a theme associated with Betty, which is more often used as accompaniment than it is as an aural cue. In many of Argento’s films, however, music plays a crucial role, not only in strengthening the shock effect of the events which occur in the narrative, but also as a means of communicating with the spectator. Sound and music is an element of a film’s textual construction which is routinely over-looked in a psychoanalytical approach to film, which will tend to focus purely on the visual construction of the film. The use of music in film is often related to the emotional response of the spectator to the text, music ordinarily being at its most noticeable when underlining and emphasising particularly emotional moments in a film’s narrative. Psychoanalysis considers emotions to be ‘secondary’ cognitive processes, and as a result psychoanalytical approaches to film, but cognitive theorists such as Torben Grodal argue against the belief that cognition and emotion are opposite functions, arguing instead that emotions are essential to “body-mind totality”⁹³. The music of Argento’s films is very much a part of their textual construction, and not simply a means to accompany the visual images. A closer analysis of the use of music in film makes using the term ‘spectator’ problematic. Throughout this dissertation I have used ‘spectator’ to mean a person experiencing a film, but, invariably, spectator is concordant with ‘viewer’, which immediately ignores the issue of sound. Although alternative terms have been suggested (“audio-viewer”⁹⁴), ‘spectator’ remains the dominant term. This lack of accommodation for the aural in the most general of terminology may well be indicative of the dominance of psychoanalysis in film theory – or the legacy of its dominance – and its preoccupation with the visual over the aural.

⁹³ Grodal, *Moving Pictures*, 5

⁹⁴ The phrase is used by Michel Chion, to more accurately emphasise the interaction between sight and hearing when experiencing film (or any audiovisual text).

Suspiria is perhaps Argento's most famous and acclaimed film and is more easily categorised as horror than much of his other work. The film follows Suzy Bannion (Jessica Harper) as she becomes a student at a prestigious ballet school in Germany and discovers that it is ruled by a coven of witches. The film is most memorable for its use of coloured lighting and unusually loud, intrusive music, which, in combination, is an aggressively sensual excess offered to the spectator during its most frantic scenes. *Suspiria*'s musical score is by Italian prog-rock band Goblin, who previously worked on the music for *Profondo Rosso*.⁹⁵ The double-murder which occurs at the beginning of *Suspiria* is perhaps the best example of the combination of colour, sound and music working in conjunction to create a nightmarish spectacle. After a brief introduction to *Suspiria*'s protagonist, Suzy, who arrives in Freiburg in the middle of a storm and unable to gain entry to the dance academy, we follow Pat (Eva Axén), who Suzy has seen running away from the school. Pat arrives at a friend's garish art-deco apartment, and refuses to share the information that has made her leave the school.⁹⁶

Pat is framed in the centre of a mid-shot of a peach-coloured bathroom. The soundtrack is silent as she looks around the room. Behind her, a window blows open, making her jump. Her friend bursts in, asking why Pat doesn't close the window, but Pat doesn't move. The camera dollies backward as her friend walks toward the window to shut it; the camera continues through the window, so that Pat and her friend are framed behind the glass. On the soundtrack, rasping sighs can be heard, while Pat's friend tells her "It's just the wind." Both girls are then framed in a simple mid-shot, as Pat is left to be alone in the room once more. The sighs continue and become louder on the soundtrack as we cut to a wide-shot of the outside of the building, with Pat looking through the bathroom window at the centre of the frame. The camera slowly zooms in on Pat looking out, as the sighs continue and are accompanied now by non-diegetic music. It is difficult to judge whether the sighs are diegetic or non-diegetic: Pat alone might hear them, but it is arguable that she appears on edge due to her fear, and not because she can hear strange sighing noises. Sound and music is a major tool used by Argento to confuse the spectator. As with the similarly confusing use of music in *Tenebrae*, the use of music here serves to complicate the film world. By confusing the diegesis here, Argento plays with the spectator's expectation of the film, signalling that something is not quite

⁹⁵ Three members of the band would go on to score *Tenebrae*, while Claudio Simonetti contributed music to *Phenomena*, *Opera*, *The Card Player* and *Mother of Tears*. Goblin reformed to compose the score to *Sleepless*, while the majority of Argento's remaining work has been scored by Ennio Morricone and Pino Donaggio.

⁹⁶ See Appendix D for figures from this sequence.

right with the narrative world. If the music in a horror film functions to “undermine the audience’s feelings of security,”⁹⁷ then Argento here takes this function to the extreme.

We then cut to a mid-shot of Pam sitting in the bathroom, and the camera slowly pans as she looks across the room. She stands and walks across the room, followed by the camera. Briefly the camera moves toward the window, as though from Pat’s point of view, before framing her at the window, a shot which is intercut with close-ups of the window itself. Pat’s face is shown in close-up looking against the window pane, and she picks up a nearby lamp to get a better view. The light causes her face to be reflected in the glass. We cut to darkness, presumably the night outside, and two green eyes appear at the centre of the screen. Pat is then shown reacting, and looking more closely toward the glass. The music fades from the soundtrack. A mid-shot from behind Pat shows her leaning against the window, and suddenly a bare, hairy arm smashes through the glass and grabs the back of Pat’s head. The spectator spends a long time with Pat before anything happens to her, allowing for a level of attachment and engagement with her. The spectator must be aligned with her in order to be fully shocked by the sequence which follows. The pause in the music just prior to the arm bursting through the window provides a moment of heightened anticipation for the spectator, prior to a shift in atmosphere and a resolution of suspense – from the fear of attack to the attack itself. This pause cannot be fully effective in causing suspense unless the spectator is aligned with – and therefore concerned for or sympathetic to – the threatened character.

Different music is now taken up on the soundtrack, which is a repetitive, percussive rhythm, played partly on the tabla drum and enhanced with synthesiser effects, coupled with a high-pitched wailing. Close-ups of Pat’s face against the glass are intercut with shots of her friend, desperately knocking at the door to get in, and of the disembodied arm at the window. In close-up, Pat’s head is shown breaking through the window pane, followed by her friend knocking at a neighbour’s door. Pat is then framed against a bare corridor,⁹⁸ screaming, when the arm appears from the right side of the frame, stabbing her. An extreme close-up shows the knife enter Pat’s abdomen. Pat’s friend is shown once more, in a wide-shot, framed by the highly decorative mezzanine of the apartment building. Another mid-shot shows Pat stabbed again, and this time the camera follows her as she keels over against a wall. She is shown in close-up sitting, slumped, as the arm reappears and stabs her again. Pat falls backward out of the shot, and we cut to the mysterious hands grabbing a nearby length of cable. Pat is shown lying against

⁹⁷ Donnelly, *The Spectre of Sound*, 88

⁹⁸ No indication is made as to where this corridor is, or how Pat got there from the bathroom. This sort of jump in location is indicative of Argento’s preoccupation with the aesthetics of the scene over its logic.

colourful stained glass. A cut to Pat's friend, on the ground floor, taken from a bird's eye view, identifies the glass as a decorative ceiling-piece. The arms tie the cable around Pat's middle, before a close-up shows her stabbed several more times. An extreme close-up shows Pat's open chest, her beating heart filling most of the frame, and the knife stabbing the organ once more. A close-up shot of Pat's head shows it breaking through the glass on which she lies, followed by another shot of her friend below, which is followed by a shot from below the glass panel, with Pat's head visible through it. The glass then breaks, which is intercut with the cable snapping away from a wall, and Pat falls through the glass. She falls into frame as the cable becomes a noose about her neck, her face framed in close-up. This cuts to a shot of the taut cable swinging; before we are shown a wide-shot of Pat's hanging body, framed against garish red walls. The music changes once more as the camera now tracks down Pat's blood-stained legs, to the pool of blood on the tiled floor, and tracks across to reveal Pat's friend supine on the floor, pieces of glass sticking from her body. The sequence ends on a wide-shot of Pat's friend, framed against the broken glass and the floor tiles. This final image is incredibly tableau-like, the woman's body perfectly arranged amongst angular pieces of glass and the angles of the black and white floor tiles. The *tableau vivant* was a form of entertainment which emerged in the 18th century, which involved actors holding a pose in a particular setting. These *tableaux* were often incorporated into theatrical performances, or were used in cabaret acts or side-shows. The *tableaux* often featured nudes and were implemented as much as erotic spectacle as they were as dramatic theatrical devices.

Pat's death is an extended, spectacular sequence which sees her psychologically tortured and repeatedly stabbed. This sequence is one which has been praised for its expertly executed technique,⁹⁹ yet stands out as an example of the aestheticisation of female death. Although arguably the film's most complicated (or convoluted) sequence, the death of Daniel later in the film is equally as outlandish, particularly in its use of point of view and music. I would argue that the primacy of the sequence's aesthetic nature is not an aspect which should necessarily be seen as a negative depiction of women or female suffering, particularly when similar examples can be found which do not involve female characters. Although the textual construction of the sequence is one which, in some respects, serves to distance the spectator from the narrative events, it simultaneously functions in such a way as to align us with them.

The painterly, tableaux-like feel of this sequence is part of what makes this sequence so spectacular, coupled with its inventive use of sound and music. These aspects of the sequence

⁹⁹ See Jouis, *Suspiria*; Gracey, *Dario Argento*, 67-76

are also what, in some respects, distance the spectator from its action. First and foremost, nothing in the sequence attempts to appear realistic, from the tastelessly colourful and decorative apartment building to the vivid lighting. The dominance of the music in this sequence also contributes to the nightmarish feel, particularly in its loud volume and its use of uncommon, manipulated instruments.¹⁰⁰ There is very little that is familiar in the sequence, be it the unnatural red and blue lighting, or the unusual music, and this unfamiliarity serves to distance the spectator from the action; the action is so conspicuous and unnatural, that it cannot fail to be recognised as a piece of film. Rather than aiming to immerse the spectator in the narrative world, Argento orchestrates an aggressive visual and aural excess which, while being appealing, blocks any conventional sense of immersion. This visual and aural blocking serves to further remove any sense of realism from the text. It also obliterates any possibility for suture during such scenes, particularly in his use of *tableaux*-like shots and nonsensical editing,¹⁰¹ further confusing expectations of what appears to be a narrative film.

That is not to say, however, that distancing the spectator from the action makes it any less easy to be engaged with the film. The spectator is very clearly intended to be aligned with Pat in this sequence, which, according to Smith, is achieved through spatio-temporal attachment and subjective access to a character. Suzy has been established as the film's protagonist,¹⁰² and she has witnessed Pat leaving the school earlier in the film. By attaching the spectator to Pat, the spectator becomes privy to more information than Suzy: when she is later informed by Madame Blanc (Joan Bennett) that a student has been murdered, the spectator is already aware, having witnessed the sequence outlined above. Arguably, the sequence is, in fact, superfluous – the spectator doesn't really know any more than Suzy, the teachers or the police about what happened to Pat, only the details of the manner in which she died. However, by depicting Pat's murder, and briefly aligning the spectator with her, Argento ensures that the spectator is invested in the mystery that Suzy faces at the dance academy from the outset. The extended nature of Pat's demise ensures that the spectator is aligned with her, by spending time with her and having clear access to her fear. The presence of Pat's friend in the scene serves to emphasise this alignment, as intercutting Pat's murder with scenes of her friend frantically trying to get help, not only emphasises the helplessness of Pat's situation, it also, in some

¹⁰⁰ These instruments are the bouzouki, a Greek stringed instrument similar to a lute or mandolin (heard in 'Sighs', played in the first half of the scene), and the tabla, an Indian drum (in 'Witch' and 'Opening to Sighs').

¹⁰¹ Dayan, *The Tutor Code of Classical Cinema*, 113-117. Dayan argues that the processes of cinematic suture 'hide' the single-frames which make up the 'moving' image of cinema, which makes the spectator aware of the film as artifice. The use of intrusive music, in addition to use of discontinuous editing and deliberately artificial mise-en-scène, Argento disrupts the processes of suture which are expected of narrative cinema.

¹⁰² Not only through her appearance at the very beginning of the film, but also through the film's opening narration.

respects, reflects the way the spectator should feel – as panicked and as desperate as Pat’s friend. If placing such a dramatic sequence at the beginning of the film serves to continually remind the spectator that the “flashing blade of the killer” might reappear at any moment throughout the film,¹⁰³ then engagement with Pat is necessary for such a reminder to prove frightening.

Point of view is not used extensively in this scene, but when it is used, it is to a particular effect. A shot from outside the bathroom window, looking in at Pat, implies a particular point of view, presumably that of the as yet unknown supernatural force associated with the witches at the school and Mater Suspiriorum herself, Helena Markos. The function of this point of view shot is to emphasise Pat’s isolation and the potential threat toward her. Smith outlines that one of the functions of point of view is to emphasise alignment with a particular character, and this is the case in the brief shot from Pat’s point of view, as she approaches the window. By not making particular use of point of view shots in this sequence, Argento ensures almost complete subjective access to Pat, while simultaneously creating a precisely structured, aesthetic portrayal of her death.

Although the highly stylised scene serves to make Pat’s murder aesthetically pleasing to watch – through the use of colour and precise mise-en-scène - and makes the spectator hyper-aware that they are watching a film; it does not force the spectator into a position any less sympathetic toward Pat. The spectator is aligned with her and so suffers with her. There is little in the scene to imply that the spectator should take any pleasure in Pat’s suffering. Again, the music works to achieve this. The spectator is experiencing loud, atonal, percussive music, all the while that Pat is under attack. The emotions that the music might elicit in the spectator serve to emphasise Pat’s fear and panic, and in turn serve to further align the spectator with her. The spectator’s own feelings of fear or unease will not be identical to those that Pat is portrayed as feeling, but they are concordant enough that sympathetic engagement is encouraged. Smith writes of the Aestheticist and Decadent movements’ emphasis on art for art’s sake, and the “concomitant rejection of the moral assessment of art, and the (perverse) discovery of beauty in acts of violence and depravity.”¹⁰⁴ With this movement as a paradigm, Smith considers the cases where the spectator is “invited to adopt an amoral attitude toward actions” that are expected to be morally evaluated. Smith predominantly correlates this Decadent/Aesthetic attitude with filmmakers described by Jonas Mekas as contributing to a ‘Baudelairean Cinema’ – filmmakers

¹⁰³ Jouis, *Suspiria*, 35

¹⁰⁴ Smith, *Gangsters, Cannibals, Aesthetes*, 228-229

such as Kenneth Anger or Jack Smith. However, such an attitude – one that invites an amoral response to the beauty found in violence – is easily applicable to Argento’s films; films which are not just visually Decadent, but aurally so too.

The music is also used in such a way as to direct the spectator to expect certain narrative developments. For example, in the above sequence, the music fades to silence, when Pat stares closely at the window, having seen the glowing green eyes outside. This brief, but noticeable, moment of silence serves to heighten the anticipation for whatever resolution will occur – in this case, that Pat is attacked. The music changes to a theme which is only heard in the film when it accompanies the death of a character, which in this scene the spectator is unaware of,¹⁰⁵ but the use of the music in this particular scene begins to familiarise the spectator with the way in which the music might be used, as a cue to a character’s death. This use of music can be seen to conform to Kevin Donnelly’s assertion that music in the horror film is an “essential part of the physicality of the demon in the film”.¹⁰⁶ That the same piece of music is used when characters are killed associates the music with the supernatural force of the witches.

Although I have argued against the assumption made by psychoanalysis that all film engagement occurs unconsciously in the spectator, there is an element of film music that relies on ‘effect’. The horror film makes use of music to cause shocks, often in the form of ‘stingers’, loud, brief blasts of music which accompany and emphasise action on-screen.¹⁰⁷ In some respects, I would argue that the music in *Suspiria* often functions as a sustained stinger, due to the volume and atonality of the music used. Michel Chion writes about the “screaming point” in film, which he identifies as a moment in film where a woman screams, usually at the end of a convoluted part of the narrative or action.¹⁰⁸ Chion states “nothing is too elaborate or far out if it will lead to a successful scream,”¹⁰⁹ citing *King Kong* (Cooper, 1933) and *The Towering Inferno* (Guillermin, 1974) as examples of films with such ‘elaborate’ narrative contrivances for that ultimately lead to a screaming point. If the music in *Suspiria* is a sustained stinger, then arguably all the formal elements of its set pieces result in sustained screaming points, the points in the film which are the reason a narrative exists at all. Chion argues that the screaming point is the “black hole” into which all other components of the film descend, that they exist to be “consumed and dissipated” by the scream.¹¹⁰ In some respects, this is precisely what occurs

¹⁰⁵ Unless, of course, the spectator is not watching the film for the first time.

¹⁰⁶ Donnelly, *The Spectre of Sound*, 106

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 91

¹⁰⁸ Chion, *The Voice in Cinema*, 77-79

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 76

during Argento's violent spectacles, wherein all pretence of narrative coherence, logic or motivation is made wholly subordinate to the scene's aesthetics – both visual and aural – and spectacle.

This is not the only way in which the music can disturb or scare the spectator, its unfamiliarity and unconventionality also serves to cause a sense of discomfort. If frequent Argento collaborators Goblin had previously scored *Profondo Rosso* using “instrumentation derived from rock music”,¹¹¹ much of their score for *Suspiria* is barely recognisable as derived from their prog-rock roots. The aforementioned tabla and bouzouki serve to provide unusual, exotic sounds, which stand out as particularly out of place in the film's Western European setting. Coupled with the sighing, rasping and wailing of the vocals, the music contributes to a highly unfamiliar soundscape. The use of other-worldly vocals and sound effects as part of the music strengthens the position of the film's music as a core element of its narrative. Tony Mitchell has described the music of *Suspiria* as a “hyper-narrative” fabric,¹¹² highlighting its importance to the narrative construction of the film, and positioning the music as far from incidental.

Diffrient aptly refers to Goblin's music for Argento's films as “shocktracks”¹¹³ and *Suspiria*'s music is the greatest demonstration of this. Its exotic instrumentation, unusual volume, dissonance and atonality contribute to the overall feeling of unease that is present in the film. Although horror film music relies upon unusual sounds – the drone, the tremolo¹¹⁴ – the combined unfamiliarity of *Suspiria*'s music works alongside the equally as unfamiliar visual elements of the film – predominantly the bright colours and the highly decorative sets – serving to heighten the sense of aesthetic dominance to the film. Despite Argento's preoccupation with his films' formal construction, alignment is still encouraged, primarily through the spectator's spatio-temporal attachment to a given character. If analyses of Argento's films are to move away from a psychoanalytical tradition, then music is a key area which demands more attention. Although *Suspiria* is the obvious choice to demonstrate this, featuring as it does, arguably, Argento's most complex soundtrack, all of his films feature music as a prominent textual element. As a key element of the films' formal construction it is one that should not, and cannot, be sidelined. The use of music is key to Argento's creation of intense spectacle. This spectacle is where the spectator is encouraged to engage and sympathise with characters the most.

¹¹¹ Donnelly, *The Spectre of Sound*, 102

¹¹² Mitchell, *Prog Rock, The Horror Film and Sonic Excess*, 93

¹¹³ Diffrient, *A Film is Being Beaten*, 58

¹¹⁴ See Donnelly, *The Spectre of Sound*, 90-93

Conclusion

Argento's Aesthetic Alignments

What I hope my analyses of Argento's most famous sequences can reveal is that taking an approach which has not been widely applied before can emphasise and illuminate aspects of his films which are generally over-looked when approached using the dominant methodology, which in the case of Argento's work is Freudian psychoanalysis. Employing a cognitive approach to explore the film text's relationship with the spectator¹¹⁵ not only allows for sympathetic engagement, it allows for the appreciation of Argento's films on an aesthetic level. Argento's frequent use of spectacle deserves greater attention than it has been given, so often over-shadowed by the criticism of the aestheticisation of female death. By moving past this frequent criticism, a cognitive approach to his films can be more usefully applied to scenes of a different sort in Argento's films, be they scenes of male death or scenes which are not violent spectacle at all.

Something I have not attempted to explore here is Smith's concept of allegiance. Smith outlines allegiance as a sort of companion to alignment. While it is predominantly the construction of the film text that encourages alignment, allegiance is more dependent upon the activity of the spectator – while a spectator may not necessarily like a character with which they are aligned, they may find a character they are not aligned with to be allied to. In order to form an allegiance to a particular character, the spectator must find the character to be morally desirable, or, as can be the case in a film full of unpleasant characters, preferable.¹¹⁶ Smith notes that the systems of value which a character is judged by are constructed internally to the film, which allows for a spectator to find characters that in reality bear morally repulsive views – such as a violent gangster, or a serial killer – morally sympathetic within the film's moral structure.¹¹⁷ I have chosen not to employ an analysis of the allegiance on offer in Argento's films. This is because allegiance relies predominantly on the individuality of the spectator. While the intended alignment can, to a degree, be determined from the film text, allegiance is a concept which is more variable and more individuated. Allegiance, as a theory, is what allows for a significantly greater acknowledgement of the activity of the spectator when engaging with a film text.

¹¹⁵ That is, the 'imagined' spectator – I do not wish to propose that what the text seems to set out to do is how the spectator necessarily engages with it.

¹¹⁶ Smith, *Engaging Characters*, 188

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 188-189

Analysing Argento's films with a cognitive approach allows for aesthetics and sympathetic engagement to sit side-by-side, and not opposite each other. Alignment with a character is not negated by a stylised, aesthetic scene of violence. Argento's obsession with spectacle is inextricable from his films, and must be accounted for in analysing them. A traditional psychoanalytical approach does not sit easily with this aspect of Argento's work, particularly when considering the representation of women therein. That Argento's work so often veers into the art film and not solely the genre product perhaps works in his favour in this respect. Perhaps if his films were not so technically experimental or accomplished his preoccupation with violent, female death might not be so easily defended. Argento's most recent films do not feature the same level of artistic spectacle as his films of the 1970s and 80s, however, a cognitive approach to even Argento's most conventional of films can reveal interesting nuances to his work.

Argento frequently aligns the spectator with the victims of violent death through spatio-temporal alignment. Although Argento's protagonists are very rarely, if ever, killed off in his films, those who do suffer are always presented to the spectator before they are attacked. Thus in a film such as *Sleepless* ('Non ho sonno', 2001), many of the murderer's victims are given a perfunctory introduction before being killed. However, this introduction serves to align the spectator with them prior to their murder, and encourage sympathy with the doomed character. In the example of *Sleepless*, this is often achieved through dynamic camerawork which is motivated by the character in question, although, typically, it often serves to confuse the spectator. For example, a character is running up some stairs, fearing for her safety, and the camera follows her, giving the impression of her pursuer's point of view. However, this is undermined when she reaches the top of the stairs and runs into the killer, waiting for her. This complicates the spectator's expectation of the scene through deliberate use of camera techniques. Subjective access is also used by Argento in order to offer alignment with a given character, very often a victim. As is the case in *Terror at the Opera*, point of view shots through editing serve to provide supreme subjective access to Betty, who, throughout the film, is a victim who is not killed. In Argento's later film, *The Stendhal Syndrome* ('La Sindrome di Stendhal', 1994), this same editing technique is used in order to provide subjective access to the protagonist, Anna Manni (Asia Argento). This is not in relation to the film's killer, however, but rather to underline her bizarre relationship with art in the film, with her point of view often

given in order to emphasise the mental disturbance caused in her by various paintings.¹¹⁸ In much the same way that Argento employs impressive camerawork in order to both align the spectator with a given character and to confuse the relationship between the spectator and the film world, so music is used to cue the spectator to expect certain eventualities from a scene. Sound effects are often incorporated into the music, which serves to complicate or confuse the spectator's expectations of a scene and the film's diegesis. To use *The Stendhal Syndrome* once more as an example, the score by Ennio Morricone incorporates indistinct, babbling voices, which are used when Anna experiences the syndrome, confusing whether they are a product of Anna's confused mind or simply part of the musical score.

At the beginning of this study I stated that Argento may be considered an *auteur*. His films are often analysed with a great awareness that it is a Dario Argento film, not only directed by him, but more often than not co-written by him too. That Argento is upheld as an *auteur* figure requires a more detailed analysis of his body of work, not the same particular films over and over again. A few analyses have been made of his later films – namely *Trauma*,¹¹⁹ *The Stendhal Syndrome*¹²⁰ and *Sleepless*¹²¹ – however, these are notably few. As I have mentioned, his later films are considered weaker in comparison to his earlier work, however, this does not necessarily mean that his later films cannot reveal similar themes or styles found in his earlier work, nor that they might not reveal different readings of his work.

One of Argento's most recent films is *The Card Player*, released in 2004. It tells the story of police detective Anna Mari (Stefania Rocca) who must track down a serial killer who kidnaps girls, and then challenges the police to games of internet poker in exchange for the girls' lives. *The Card Player* is not Argento's finest hour; however, it does yield some interesting scenes to examine, particularly in relation to ideas of spectatorship and engagement. Part-way through the film Anna has recruited the help of a young star poker player, Remo (Silvio Muccino), to play against the killer. Waiting at the police headquarters, the killer contacts them once more, and Remo must play. The game is shot in such a way that intercuts shots of the computer screen with shots of the police officers and Remo, huddled around the computer. Close-ups are shown of Remo as he plays, and of a part of the computer screen which shows the kidnapped girl in a grainy webcam image. The officers witness the kidnapped girl become free of her

¹¹⁸ The Stendhal syndrome is a psychosomatic condition caused by exposure to works of art, and can involve hallucinations as well as fainting.

¹¹⁹ See Mendik, *From the Monstrous Mother to the Third Sex*

¹²⁰ See Hoxter, *Anna with a Devil Inside*

¹²¹ See Koven, *La Dolce Morte*

binds, and attempt and escape. New shots are shown of the kidnapped girl struggling with her captor, allowing greater access to the action than the police officers. These shots are few, however, and serve to show the webcam being knocked over or moved by the girl or the killer, thus allowing the police officers to continue watching her attempted escape, then her murder.

This scene can be read as a tidy microcosm of the film spectator's relationship to Argento's myriad murder victims (or, his victims of his desire to create a spectacle). The police officers who surround the computer screen are positioned to attempt to help the kidnapped girl. As the scene progresses, however, the girl succeeds in apparently helping herself, by freeing herself of the ropes which tie her down. In helping herself she renders the police helpless, who can now do nothing more than watch as she attempts to escape. In some respects, this is similar to the spectator's experience in watching an Argento film: the spectator, in being aligned with a character, is sympathetic toward them, but are, of course, helpless. A psychoanalytical approach might consider this scene as an example of the way in which cinema can function as a 'mirror', however, to approach the scene as I have approached others places the spectator in alignment with the police officers. This alignment is not such as to make the spectator replicate the emotions of the police – though they may well be concerned for the kidnapped girl's safety – rather it serves to emphasise the helplessness of the officers. In light of the concept of 'attraction' in film, the scene the officers watch unfold in the film is, in some respects, the same spectacle that the film spectator is offered by Argento. In this instance, however, the spectator spends most of the scene looking at the police officers, who are watching the spectacle. The officers shout at the screen, either cursing the murderer or cheering on the girl. While represented as helpless, they are certainly active, interacting with what they see unfold before them.

It is perhaps indicative of the validity of MacCormack's statement regarding Argento's films that two of the three of his most iconic and over-analysed films do not feature female killers.

Suspiria does, in that it is a film about witches, but its crimes are committed by disembodied supernatural forces and not human women. The killers of *Tenebrae* and *Terror at the Opera* are both men who have experienced traumatic or formative sexual experiences with dominant women. A large proportion of Argento's films, however, particularly his earlier films, feature women as the killers: seven, in total, not including his Three Mothers trilogy.¹²² This is an under-analysed aspect of Argento's films, which would benefit from an approach which does not rely on psychoanalysis.

¹²² The Three Mothers trilogy consists of the films *Suspiria*, *Inferno* (1980) and *Mother of Tears* (2007).

To conclude, employing a cognitive approach over a psychoanalytical one to Argento's films reveals a dual function of spectacular scenes of violence: that of an aesthetic appeal, and that of a heightened sense of alignment. Through allowing for spectatorial activity, the film text does not only appeal to artistic desires – through camerawork, editing, or music – but also encourages sympathetic alignment with characters as they are subjected to horrific acts of stylised violence. As *Tenebrae* demonstrates, bravura camerawork can function to both distance the spectator from the diegesis, while also providing a greater level of spatio-temporal alignment with a given character. In *Terror at the Opera*, editing is used in such a way so as to provide a greater sense of subjective access to characters, particularly through the employment of their point of view. Rather than providing direct access to their point of view – which would limit the subjective access – alignment is achieved through an emphasis on the character's face and eyes. *Suspria* best demonstrates Argento's masterful use of music. While the music is aggressive – at times shockingly loud – the use of leitmotifs and pauses cues the spectator to expect danger, and should they be successfully aligned with a character, increases the spectatorial concern or fear for them. Naturally, cognitivism is but one alternative approach to Argento's work, and Argento is but one director. Other approaches may prove fruitful, and may add up to provide as rich readings of Argento's work as psychoanalysis has done in the past. As I have briefly noted above, an approach such as cognitivism, which should step away from the preconceptions held about Argento's work, could now be usefully applied to Argento's later work, not only to provide a broader analysis of his canon of films, but in order to potentially reveal interesting nuances to films generally considered to be his lesser films. I would also propose considering Argento's later work in light of developments in the horror genre as a whole. Argento's aestheticism is present throughout his oeuvre. As a result of the critical tendency to prioritise the aesthetic representation of female death in his films, there remains a great deal of over-looked and under-valued representations to consider across the range of his work. It is only by approaching Argento's filmic legacy with a fresh approach – an approach which might further energise the study of the horror genre – that a more complete understanding of the myriad complexities of his aesthetics and the ways in which he represents the experiences of his women – and men – might be achieved.

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Filmography

The Bird with the Crystal Plumage ('L'uccello dalle piume di cristallo', Dario Argento, 1970)

Black Sunday ('La Maschera del demonio', Mario Bava, 1960)

Blood and Black Lace ('Sei donne per l'assassino', Mario Bava, 1964)

The Card Player ('Il Cartaio', Dario Argento, 2004)

Carrie (Brian De Palma, 1976)

Cat O'Nine Tails ('Il Gatto a Nove Code', Dario Argento, 1971)

The Church ('La Chiesa', Michele Soavi, 1989)

Dellamorte Dellamore (Michele Soavi, 1994)

Demons ('Demoni', Lamberto Bava, 1980)

Don't Torture a Duckling ('Non si sevizia un paperino', Lucio Fulci, 1972)

Dracula (Terence Fisher, 1957)

Four Flies on Grey Velvet ('4 mosche di velluto grigio', Dario Argento, 1972)

The Girl Who Knew Too Much ('La ragazza che sapeva troppo', Mario Bava, 1968)

Halloween (John Carpenter, 1979)

The House by the Cemetery (Lucio Fulci, 1981)

Inferno (Dario Argento, 1980)

King Kong (Merian Cooper, 1933)

Lizard in a Woman's Skin ('Una lucertola con la pelle di donna', Lucio Fulci, 1971)

Mother of Tears ('La Terza Madre', Dario Argento, 2007)

Once Upon a Time in the West ('C'era una volta il West', Sergio Leone, 1968)

The Phantom of the Opera (Rupert Julian, 1925)

Profondo Rosso (Dario Argento, 1975)

Psycho (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960)

The Sect ('La Setta', Michele Soavi, 1991)

Sleepless ('Non ho sonno', Dario Argento, 2001)

The Stendhal Syndrome ('La Sindrome di Stendhal', Dario Argento, 1996)

Suspiria (Dario Argento, 1977)

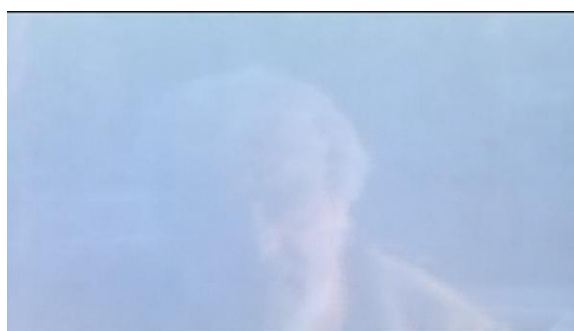
Tenebrae (Dario Argento, 1982)

Terror at the Opera ('Opera', Dario Argento, 1987)

The Towering Inferno (Irwin Allen, 1974)

Trauma (Dario Argento, 1992)

Appendix A - *Tenebrae* (I)



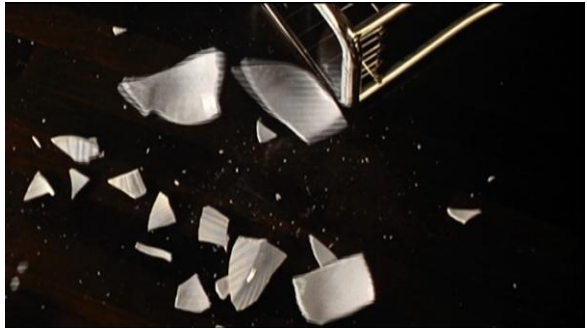




Appendix B – *Tenebrae* (II)

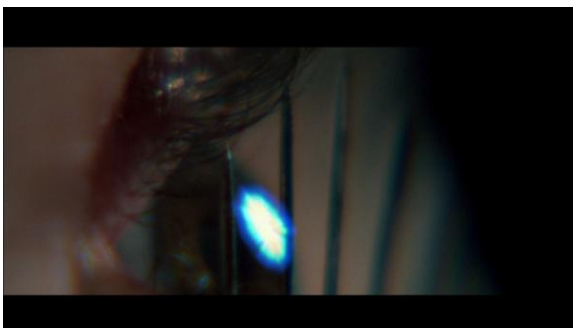
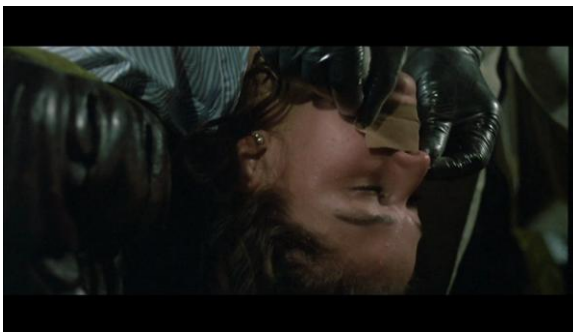








Appendix C – *Terror at the Opera*







Appendix D - *Suspiria*

